

**2012 Mid-Shore Diversity Summit
October 16, 2012
The Milestone
9630 Technology Drive
Easton, Maryland 21601**

Workshop 111

The Immigrant Experience: from the Caribbean Islands to Rural USA. – Karen B. Francis, Ph.D.

Objectives: This workshop will:

- Engage participants in a discussion about the immigration experience of children and their families from the Caribbean Basin,
- Explore the factors that impact mental well-being and psychological adjustment of Caribbean Basin immigrant children,
- Present effective strategies for providing cultural and linguistically competent services for Caribbean Basin immigrant youth and their families in rural communities.

Workshop Description:

The Caribbean Basin consists of all the islands in the Caribbean as well as South and Central American countries bordering the Caribbean Sea. This region is the source of the largest U.S immigrant group of African heritage. The pursuit of *economic* prosperity and the hope of providing a better life for themselves and their families have led many individuals to leave their homelands. Many children are left with family members while their parents move to live and work in the United States. During this time of physical separation there also tends to be significant emotional separation as quite often economic constraints and the pressures associated with living in America tend to negate the ability of most parents to visit or re-unite with their children. Re-unification comes at a very high emotional cost for both children and parents. In addition the impact of poverty, inconsistent parental supervision due to parents working long hours out of the home, create mental health concerns for immigrant children that manifest themselves in their school performance and may also have an impact on their overall health and well-being.

This workshop will examine the factors that serve as stressors and impact the mental health and well-being of immigrant children from the Caribbean Basin. The workshop will also engage participants in discussion about effective strategies for providing cultural and linguistically competent cross-system services and supports for immigrant youth and their families from the Caribbean Basin in rural communities.